



THE
COMMODITY
EXCISED.

OR,

The Women in an Uproar.

A NEW

BALLAD OPERA.

As it will be privately acted, in
the secret Apartments of Vine-
ners and Tobacconists.

*Ladies, what think you? Is it not a Surprise,
Your Commodities now are under Excise:
Use the Officers well, they soon will comply,
A Bottle to Females they scarce will deny.*

By TIMOTHY SMOKE.

L O N D O N :

Printed for the AUTHOR, and Sold by T. BANCERS
near Fleet-Bridge, and the Booksellers of Lon-
don and Westminster. MDCCXXXIII.

Price Six-pence.

Y T I O M M O D
Dramatis Personæ.

Calfskin, a Bookseller.

Jingle, a Poet.

Sotfwced, a Virginia Merchant.

*Worthy, a young Gentleman of a good Estate, in
Love with Sotfwced's Daughter.*

Dashwell, a Vintner.

Richard, Servant to Worthy.

Drawer, &c.

W O M E N.

Mrs. Sotfwced, Wife to Mr. Sotfwced.

Celinda, her Daughter, in Love with Worthy.

Betty, her Maid.

*Mrs. Raifin, Mrs. Tallow, and Mrs. Barley,
Tradesmen's Wives,*





INTRODUCTION.

Author *and* Bookseller, *meeting in the Piazza's* Covent-Garden.

Calfskin.



O, Mr. *Jingle*, I am glad to see you; Where have you led your Life so long? I have not seen any of your Productions these three Months? Is there no private or publick Scandal stirring, out of which you can pick Materials enough for a Pamphlet?

Jingle. Why, truly, Sir, I think the Town is pestered enough with Pamphlets already, as to private Life. The Quality are grown so refined, that they think their Reputation to be like their Credit, that is, not worth keeping up; and then as to publick Affairs, there are so many weekly Papers engaged about them, that it is in vain for me to write, unless now and then a Song or two; and you Booksellers don't much care for them; you love something more voluminous.

B

Calf.

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Calfskin. You say right, for there's but little got by such Trifles; if they don't Sell the first Day of Publication, the Sale of them is damned at once. Besides, we Book-sellers are now mostly taken up with Subscriptions.

Fingle. That's very true; so that you don't care to meddle with any new Thing, unless you can have the Copy for a Trifle; and, after that Rate, an Author stands but a poor Chance for a Livelihood.

Calfskin. I am sorry you have such an Opinion of me; I believe you have no Reason for it, because I always Pay ready Money for what Copies I buy.—I am not like C——l, take an Author's Works, read them over, and steal the best Thoughts out of them, seem to dislike the Thing, and then get a common Hack to write on the same Subject.—No, no, Mr. *Fingle*, I am above those things.

Fingle. You seem to be warm, as if I only applied it to you.—I speak of the Trade in general.—I can't say but you pay very honestly, tho', I must say you beat me down very low: But, however, as we have met, and, if you can spare Time, I will talk with you about a little Production of mine, which I think to put to the Press,

Calfskin,

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Calfskin. With all my Heart.——I am not in a very great Hurry; and if I like the Thing, and we can agree, I will give you the Money immediately for it. Pray what is it?

Fingle. Why, it is a Touch upon the Times, and writ in Imitation of the Beggar's Opera.

Calfskin. Pray, what Title do you intend to give it? for now a-days, you know, 'tis that which often sells the Book.

Fingle. I call it the *Commodity excis'd*.—It is now in Rehearsal; and if you will walk into the House with me, you may hear it; and perhaps we may strike a Bargain.

Calfskin. I like the Title very well, and as the Excise has made such a Noise every where, there's a Probability of a Sale for it, and I will give you as much as any one; so without Ceremony, if you will introduce me, I shall be obliged to you.

Fingle. With all my Heart, Sir, and I believe the Actors are about beginning the Rehearsal.



THE
COMMODITY.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A Parlour.*

Servant to *Sotsweed*.



IR, Mr. *Worthy* is just alighted at the Door.

Sotsf. Pray desire him to walk in. ——— I didn't expect him, tho' I suppose my Daughter did.

Enter *Worthy*.

Mr. *Sotsweed*, your most obedient humble Servant, I hope your good Family are well.

Sotsf. Mr. *Worthy*, you are welcome to Town; as to my Family, they are pretty well, I thank you. ——— My Wife and Ce-
linda

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linda are gone a visiting; the Girl has been in the Country these three Months, and came to Town but Yesterday.

Worthy. I am glad to hear she is in Town now.

Sotf. I rejoice, Mr. *Worthy*, to see you look so hail, for most of you *Oxonians* lose your Colour, before you get to the Degree of Batchelor of Arts; so that between drinking and whoring, you are Consumptive at thirty, and then begin to think of a Wife, not for her Benefit but your own; and so make a Nurse of a Girl of sixteen, to wait on you in your Illness.

Worthy. How so, Sir, I should always think, to see my Wife happy made me so too. I wonder you have such an Opinion of us young Fellows.

Sotf. Because I think you are all alike.— The Age is come to such a pass, that a young Fellow is not thought a jolly Companion, nor fit to be kept Company with, unless he can produce three or four Surgeons Receipts.

Worthy. I am sorry you condemn all for the Sake of a few. I'll assure you, Sir, I never paid a Surgeon's Bill in my Life.

Sotf. Come, come, none of your equivocating.—No Evasion, I beseech you.— You say, you never paid a Surgeon's Bill; that

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that may be ; but then pray, Sir, upon your Honour, have you none to pay ?

Worthy. No, indeed, I never employed one, so consequently can have none to pay.

Sotf. That may be too.——You may go to the *Anodyne Necklace* without *Temple-Bar*, the *Golden Ball* in *Fleetstreet*, *Rock's* in *Black-fryers*, or any other wholesale Warehouse about Town, and there you have Medicines ready prepared ; and as you pay ready Money, have no Occasion for a Bill.

Wor. You are merry. — I am glad to see you so, tho' should be very sorry if you thought me given that Way.

Sot/w. And so you would fain persuade me that you, a young brisk Collegian, wou'd lie with no body but your Bed-maker.

Wor. Not even with her, I assure you ; for was I ever so viciously given, her Age and Ugliness are sufficient Antidotes.

Sot/w. Now you give me a Reason ; but I have a tolerable Opinion of you, tho' I can't believe you too modest neither. — I warrant you that you will persuade me all your Fellow-Collegians are Saints.

Wor. I don't desire you should think them Saints, tho' I would not have you think them Satyrs or Devils ; and to be free with you, Sir, we have Men as old as you that are as vicious as the worst of the young Fellows amongst us.

Sot/w.

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Sotfw. Say you so, my Lad; prithee produce an Instance; for I love a merry Story.

Wor. To divert you then, I will tell you one: A young Baronet of *St.* ——— *College* having got the Good-will of a Tradesman's Daughter, prevail'd with her to disguise herself, and to lodge with him: The amorous Female consented, and in Disguise got into the College, and to Bed they went.

Sotfw. What is all this to the Purpose? This exposes the Youth; you promis'd to tell me a Story of an old Stager.

Wor. And so I will, Sir; but you interrupt me.

Sotfw. I ask your Pardon; I thought you had done; pray proceed.

Wor. The loving Couple, little thinking a Discovery, passed their Time, I suppose, agreeably: But a Collegian, who was privy to the Affair, discover'd it to the Head of the College; who about Two in the Morning knock'd very hard at the young Baronet's Door, and demanded Entrance. — He, you must think, made what Excuses he could, but all would not prevail; for he vowed to break it open. — At last the Door was opened, and the old Don approached the Bed, and found the guilty Fair. — The Youth on his Knees implored Pardon for the Offence; but the old one was inexorable,
till

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till Sir *Harry* by chance cast his Eyes on his Stockings, and finding them not Fellows, briskly rises up, and desires to know who was the Doctor's Bedfellow; for Sir, says he, you have robb'd her of a Stocking. — Old Hypocrisy looking at his Feet, found a black one, and the other blue, with a white Clock to it, which plainly shewed what he had been at. — At last it was agreed to keep one another's Counsel, which was done, till the young Baronet's Uncle dying, who was his Guardian, he quitted the University, and divulged the Story.

Sotfw. 'Tis an ugly thing to be catch'd. — But I can hardly believe it of an old Fellow. — We'll wave these Stories. — Will you go with me to *Dashwell's* to Night, and take a Bottle?

Wor. With all my Heart, Sir; I am proud of your Company, and love to obey your Commands.

Sotfw. You are a fly young Dog, and think one Day or other to call me Father-in-Law, and so command my Daughter. You are a fly one; but come *Jack*, come along, I love to be merry, you know.

A I R

A New BALLAD-OPERA. 9

A I R I.

*We Fathers grown old,
Don't love to be told
Of Faults we've committed when young;
But yet we all love
The Youth to reprove,
And Vices to scourge with our Tongue.*

II.

*We ne'er think we
So wicked could be,
At least we could cover the Cheat;
For it is in this,
We never can miss
To mimick the Arts of the Great.* Exit.

S C E N E II.

Celinda in her Chamber, reading.

*Love, what a God art thou! no Pow'r divine
Enjoys an Empire uncontroll'd like thine:
O'er Kings and Gods extends thy boundless Sway,
And Kings on Earth, and Gods in Heav'n obey.*

What an extensive Subject Love is, and how we poor Girls are bound to strict Rules in it: We wish with Passion, and yet we scornfully deny: What a Life do I lead? I want for nothing 'tis true; Books and a Country House I am allowed: What then, I am miserable: O Worthy, Worthy! thou
C hast

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hast my Heart, yet Love a Maiden's Tongue
should ne'er pronounce; but oh !

*It's Musick to my Soul, it lulls my Care,
And like the Syren's Charms makes Ruin fair.*

Enter Betty running.

Madam, Madam, I am sure I bring
good News; now, come Madam, dress your-
self and look brisk, the Thief's come to Town
who robbed you.

Celinda. Is the Girl mad, what are you
talking about, I know of no body that ever
robbed me?

Betty. No, Madam. Why I thought you
had often told me that Mr. *Worthy* had stole
your Heart.

Celinda. What's that to the Purpose

Betty. Why then he's a Thief, and now in
Town.

Celina. Dear *Betty* are you in earnest?

Betty. As I hope to be saved I am, and
have got a Letter for you. Mr. *Richard* gave
me the Letter and this Broad-piece, and told
me his Master said, that tho' Broad-pieces
were called in, they were good Gold, and he
believed Chambermaids would not refuse to
take them for Guineas, for that you know
was my usual Fee.

Celinda.

A New BALLAD-OPERA. III

Celinda. How can you torment me so, to detain the Letter so long from me, give it me this Moment.

Betty. Here it is Madam, and Mr. *Richard* gives his humble Duty to you.

Celinda. Pray be quiet ; I know you are pleased now Mr. *Richard* is come to Town.

Betty. I can't say but I respect the Man as much as you do or can the Master. [*aside.*]

Celinda reads.

My dearest Charmer,
FULL of Love and Truth I have left
Oxford to bless myself with a Sight of
You, and no longer could I live without it.
—I am now resolved either to be happy or
miserable, for your Father's Consent I am
determined to ask as soon as I have your's, if
you grant me that I am happy indeed. —
Your Father now stays for me, which makes
me conclude myself,

My dear Soul,

Your faithful Adorer

Will. Worthy.

Celinda. *Worthy* thou art by Name and Nature! my Heart you already have, and can my Consent be wanting. Oh! *Betty*, here's a Letter is a Cordial to my Soul! A Letter

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wrote with Truth and Sincerity; not filled with nauseous Flattery or fulsome Panegyrics.

Betty. And Madam, Mr. *Richard* commanded me to tell you that. —

Celinda. What, *Betty*! are you under Command already?

Betty. Law, Madam, I am in a Flutter! Why then he bid or desired me to acquaint you, that Mr. *Worthy* was gone to the Tavern along with your Father, and that as soon as possible he could leave the old Man with good Manners, he would wait on you.

Celinda. Well! who knows but Fortune may prove kind at last. — *Betty*, can't you give me a Song, I am in a gay Humour.

Betty. Yes, Madam, I will, and to give you a good Opinion of it, you must know Mr. *Worthy* was the Author, and you partly the Subject. — A Friend gave it me, and taught me the Tune.

Celinda. I can easily guess who your Friend was, but pray sing it.

Betty. I suppose you think Mr. *Richard*, but no matter, I'll sing it.

A I R

A I R II.

I.

*Venture not with Love to jest,
Tho' he's blind, and but a Boy;
Whosoe'er would live at rest,
Must not dare with him to toy,
If you play, he'll seem to smile,
But conspire your Death the while.*

II.

*I my self was such a Sot,
Once to act a Lover's Part;
Seem'd to Love, but lov'd her not;
Sigh'd, but sigh'd not from my Heart.*

III.

*Love the Jester will assail,
And when scorn'd, the Mastery get:
Art, I see, can ne'er avail,
Him who plays the Counterfeit;
For I find now Time is past,
Jest to earnest turn'd at last.*

IV.

*Cupid drew with more Desire,
Seeing me his Net despise,
Was more active with his Fire,
While he found my Heart was Ice;
Now my Sighs no Pity find,
But are scatter'd in the Wind.*

Now, Madam, how do you like it?

Celinda. 'Tis impossible for me to mislike it, now you have told me the Author.

Betty.

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Betty. I heartily wish you had what you desire. I long to see how Matirmony will agree with you.

Celinda. Very well, I don't at all doubt it; I believe my Spouse will be without Fault. Oh! dear *Worthy*!

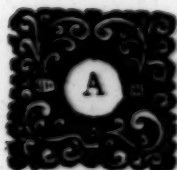
*Thou dear, resistless Tyrant, is my Breast,
With nothing else but thy bright Form possesst;
And thus forever thou, without Controul,
Shalt reign triumphant Monarch in my Soul.*

A C T II.

SCENE I. *A Room in a Tavern.*

Enter Sotsweed, Worthy, and a Drawer.

Sotsweed.



BOTTLE of Wine, some Pipes and Tobacco, and desire your Master to come here.

Drawer. Yes, Sir.

Sotsw. I believe we shall have but little Company here to Night, they are all gone to the other End of the Town about this *Excise Bill.*

Wor.

A New BALLAD-OPERA. 15

Wor. I think that is all the Talk every where in Town and Country. — Pray, Sir, what is your Opinion of it?

Sotsw. Why, my Opinion is, that it will spoil Trade, and ruin us all: But here comes *Dasbwell*, let us ask his Opinion about it.

Enter Dasbwell.

Your Servant, Gentlemen; *Mr. Worthy*, you are welcome to Town.

Wor. Thank you, Sir. — Won't you sit down and take a Glas. — You grow fat upon it.

Dasb. Fat, d'ye say, Sir, you are very much mistaken. I lose Flesh every Hour, and am forced to alter all my Cloaths with fretting about this damned *Excise*.

Wor. We were thinking to ask your Opinion of it.

Dasb. My Opinion is, that it will be worse than a Civil War, for there we have a Chance to resist, and so save our Houses from being plundered; but, according to this Scheme we are to be rumaged and ruined by Law. — *Mr. Sotsw.*, your House, in a little Time, will be as publick as mine; nay, after this Rate, there won't be a private House in the Kingdom. — I wish the Devil had the P——r.

Sotsw.

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Sotsw. I don't know who is the Projector, but they call it the *Norfolk Scheme*.

Dash. Some of the Min——l Hirelings tell us, that it is for our Good; particularly one, who calls himself the *Hyp-Doctor*, says, that People experienced in State Affairs, think it just and equitable; and tells us, that it is brought upon us for our Sins, and our unjust defrauding and cheating the King of his Duty. Oh! Mr. *Worthy*, what must we do in this Affair!

Worthy. As to Frauds in the Revenue, it hath been demonstrated, as far as such a Point can be cleared, that an Excise will not prevent them, without some miraculous Operation in the Minds of the Officers; but supposing that to be the Case, I think no Improvement of the Revenue whatsoever (unless in Times of the greatest Necessity) ought to be put in Competition with two of the greatest and most fundamental Privileges of *Englishmen*, Tryals by Juries, and the Freedom of their own Houses.

Sotsw. That's very true; but alas! they endeavour to break through it. They say, Tradesmen are too rich, and ought to be squeezed; but, I think, the Courtiers squeeze them enough already, by getting in their Books.

Wor.

A New BALLAD-OPERA. 17

Wor. I think they say, that there won't be above 250 Officers added, besides Warehouse-keepers, &c.

Dasb. That's a mere Falshood. This Argument was made use of last Year for about 600 Officers for the Salt Duty, and may be repeated every Year with equal Force, for a farther Addition, till all the fighting Men in the Nation are converted into Civil and Military Dragoons.

Sotfw. Sure all our great Men (as they call themselves) are turned Phyicians; for, say they, Wine is pernicious to our Healths; there are so many Ingredients mix'd with it after the Vintner has it.

Dasb. Ay; and they say, too, that the Tobaccoists are sad Dogs at Mixture; that they wet their Tobacco, and cheat the King damnablely on Exportation.

Wor. I think it is pretty strange, that in the midst of Peace we should have new Taxes imposed, and especially such a one as this.—But it is a rare Contrivance for carrying on an Amour. Why, if a young Fellow courts a Girl, he need not want Admittance to the House, if he keeps the Exciseman Company.

Sotfw. That's very true; and I believe I shall have you in my Division.

Wor. You are pretty much in the Right, Sir; for I must pay my Respects sometimes to
Celinda.

D

Sotfw.

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Sotfw. I thought so ; but pray, young Man, let your Designs be honourable.

Wor. That they always were, and shall be ; and to convince you, Sir, of my Sincerity, am ready to treat with you about that important Affair of Life, called Marriage. My Fortune is now at my own Disposal ; so that I can make a Jointure to any Woman.

Sotfw. So, then, you've got *Celinda's* Consent already, I find.

Wor. No, indeed Sir, I never flatly ask'd it ; but I have Reason to believe I have some Interest in her Heart.

Sotfw. I believe so too : — If you can get her's and her Mother's Consent, you shall have mine, I assure you, Sir.

Wor. Sir, I thank you, and will endeavour to gain both their Consents by deserving it.

Dash. Well said.—— Push boldly at them ; a young Fellow, and handsome, as you are, should take no Denial.

Wor. Why, you make an Exciseman already of me ; for if they won't peaceably surrender, they storm the Fortrefs.

Dash. Ay : D'ye think they will be so impudent as that ?

Wor. Yes, Sir, I do think so, and believe the Country Ale-Wives know it to be true, as well as their Daughters ; there are more Bastards got by those Fellows than by the Foot-Soldiers.

Dash.

A New BALLAD-OPERA. 19

Dasb. What shall I do then? After this Rate I shall die a Cuckold.

Wor. That you may do, perhaps, if you die To-morrow.

Dasb. I can't help it, Sir, if it is my Fortune; I shan't be the first Cuckold has had Christian Burial: But this is a melancholy Subject, shall I sing you an old Song about it?

Wor. With all my Heart.

Dasbwell sings.

*A Cuckold, it is thought
A most reproachful Name,
Wives they commit the Fault,
And Husbands bear the Blame.
'Tis natural for Woman
Such little Slips to make,
And if it were not common,
How many Heads would ache.
I'll give my Wife her Humour,
If she'll but give me mine,
And tho' there are false Rumours,
I never will repine.
If she a Cuckold makes me,
I'll pay her in her Coin,
And may the Devil take me,
If e'er I lag behind.*

Sotfw. Well said, Neighbour, 'tis a good Resolution to pay 'em in their own Coin.—
Come, drink about, Mr. *Worthy*.

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Dash. That's a good Thought.--- Let us drink as much as we can before this Monster comes upon us.--- *Mr. Sotfweed,* can't you sing us a Song in praise of Wine?

Sotfw. It is past ten, and time to go to Bed!

Dash. But, dear Sir, one Song first.

Sotfw. I have to be ask'd often: But send your Porter to my House, and bid them make a Bed for Mr. *Worthy*.

Dash. Yes, Sir.

Sotfweed sings.

*Let's drink and revel whilst we may,
And wisely prop our nodding Fate;
The eager Minutes fly away,
And then, alas, 'twill be too late.*

II.

*Egypt is fruitful still the more,
The Channel of the Nile runs high:
But when she leaves the beaten Shore,
The Meadows seem to pine and die.*

III.

*Nature is constant still in this,
The very Gods themselves would think
Their Life but an imperfect Bliss,
Had they no Champaign to drink.*

IV.

*The Indian Printes scarce are found
But in their drunken Fits to play,
Like their great God they still go round,
And rise much fresher every Day.*

Wor.

A New BALLAD-OPERA. 21

Worthy. I think Sir, you have a prodigious strong Voice, and sing as well now, as you did seven Years ago.

Sotfw. You are right, I take care of my self, and tho' I sometimes drink hard, I get to Bed betimes ; — why there's more kill'd by setting up of Nights, than by hard drinking.

Worthy. Indeed I believe it, and now your usual Hour approaches.

Sotfw. I know you are impatient to see the Girl, and wish me hanged for detaining you so long : Here Drawer, call a Coach. — Mr. *Dashwell*, your House looks empty to Night.

Dash. Yes Sir, most of my Customers are gone to know when they are to be made Slaves of. — My Wife shall never wear a Blue Gown any more, because the Greatest — in the Nation love that Colour.

Drawer. There's a Coach at the Door, Sir.

Sotfw. } Mr *Dashwell*, I wish you good

Worthy. } Night. *Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A Scene in Sotfwed's House.*

Betty and Richard.

Richard. Why this is kind of the old Gentleman, to invite my Master to lie here.

Betty. Kind d'ye call it, why my Master's as much in love with Mr. *Worthy* as my young Mistress

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Mistress ; she's in love with his Person, and he with his Parts.

Rich. I am very glad to hear that, for my Master has been crazy ever since he left *London*, and has spoiled all the Glass in his Room at *Oxford*, with writing *Celinda's* Name on it.

Bet. And my young Mistress the next Day after he left *London*, retired to a lonely House at *Humerton*, and came to Town but yesterday.

Rich. Well, there's some Hopes of a Wedding ---. What think you of it, *Betty*, if we two make another ; we have been acquainted a long Time ?

Bet. Why, I don't know what to think, I believe I shall follow my Mistress's Example.

Rich. Well said, then seal the Bargain with a Kiss --- I have got a little Money, and so have you ; and according to the Fashion of People of our Rank, we can set up a Chandler's Shop.

Bet. Very true, I hope we shall live happy.

Rich. When shall be the Wedding Day ?

Bet. Not till my Mistress's — I'll start fair.

Rich. Well, I must have Patience, tho' I believe my Master is so eager, it wont be long first : — Well *Betty*, if we do but agree after Marriage, as well as before, I am sure we shall be happy.

*For Marriage Joys consist in only this,
United Concord gives th' unbounded Bliss.*

A C T

A C T III.

SCENE, *A Parlour in Sotsweed's House.*

Worthy and Celinda.

Celinda.



RAY Mr. *Worthy*, what made your Stay in *Oxford* so short this Time?

Worthy. Your dear self, for you was never out of my Thoughts, nor could I live any longer without seeing you.

Celin. Woman is soft, and of a tender Nature, easily caught by the alluring Wiles of Man, who study Words and Ways to deceive the uncaution'd Maid.

Worthy. (kneeling) By Heav'n and all the Powers above, I swear, I love you as my Soul, nor do I ever speak to you but when my Heart accompanies my Tongue. May the Almighty Power rivet me fast to the Ground, if I endeavour to deceive you; — I only try by honourable means to gain your Heart, and then by such means as Heaven has ordain'd to make you mine.

Celin. Sir, I beg you would rise, — I do believe you a Man of Honour; — I find you are
given

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given to Poetry ; my Maid sung me a Song Yesterday, of your making ; Pray Sir, if it ben't too great a Favour, let me have one from you.

Worthy. There's nothing in my Power but you can command : Well Madam, I'll give you a Song I made on your Retirement into the Country. *(sings.*

I.

*To Shades and Groves art thou by Fate
Maliciously confin'd ;
Or chuse you that obscure Retreat,
The Glory of her Kind ?*

II.

*Sure Jove in forming thee so bright,
So excellently fair,
Ne'er destin'd so much heav'nly Light,
To burn reclusely there.*

III.

*What tho' thy Eyes, thy lovely Eyes,
Triumph o'er all the Plains :
Yet, bright Celinda, thou'rt a Prize
Prohibited to Strains.*

IV.

*Thy Air, thy Smiles, thy charming Wit,
Which all Mankind admire,
Would here fresh Conquests hourly get,
And all our Harps inspire.*

Cel. I am very much oblig'd to you for your Compliments, Sir, tho' I am conscious I don't deserve them.

Worthy.

A New BALLAD-OPERA. 25

Wor. I am sure you do deserve them and many more, and I could wish it were in my Power to persuade you to make me happy.

Cel. I hope, Sir, I shall never make you unhappy.

Wor. That I can't tell, for my Fate is at your Disposal; I broke my Mind to your Father last Night about you, who told me, his Consent should not be wanting, could I gain yours.

Cel. Matrimony is a thing for Life, and a Life I think in which there is no Medium. — The Parties are either very happy, or very miserable.

Wor. My Endeavours shall be to make it a continual Scene of Happiness; for I would not take your Hand without your Heart, and if your Love is equal to mine, it will be impossible to be unhappy.

Cel. Mr. *Worthy*, I believe you, and to convince you, here's my Hand, for I can't deny it to one who has my Heart already.

Wor. With thanks to Heaven, I receive it. — Excuse me, Madam, I have not Words to express my Gratitude for so great a Favour.

Cel. I excuse you, and have only this Favour to desire of you, that you won't twit me hereafter for my easy Surrender.

Wor. I am sorry you should think of it. — Can I ever chide one so lovely?

26 *The* **COMMODITY** *Excis'd :*

*Such pleasing Looks in midst of Spring adorn
The flow'ry Fields, so smiles the beauteous Morn.
So mild your Eyes, so beautiful and bright,
That lovelier Eyes did ne'er salute the Light ;
With such a taking Look, and such an Air,
So lovely, so exceeding sweet and Fair,
To me you seem a heav'nly Messenger.* }

Madam, as Providence, at length, has blest'd
me with your Consent — I hope you will
join with me in gaining the Consent of your
Father and Mother.

Cel. I am at your command, Sir.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *A Dining-room, with Mrs.
Sotfweed, Mrs. Dashwell, Mrs. Raisin,
Mrs. Tallow, and Mrs. Barley, sitting
round it.*

Mrs. Sotf. Well, Ladies, what Topick
shall we go upon to Day — Scandal or Po-
liticks.

Mrs. Dash. Oh, by all Means Politicks.—
Last Night I heard my Husband in a very
great Fume, cursing and damning about a
Scheme that's going on, which he calls *Ex-
cise*. I believe the Man is mad about it,
for he talks in his Sleep of it.

Mrs. Sotf.w. I really believe it's the same
thing I read about last Night.—I sent *Betty* for
some

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some Tarts, and she brought them wrapt up in a Paper called Mr. *Lynn's Justification*, which mentions something of it.

Mrs. *Raisin*. But, pray, Ladies, what is that to our Sex?

Mrs. *Dasb*. I think it concerns us very much; for by the Laws of *Excise* we are obliged to make an Entry of the House and Place where our Commodities are kept; so that our Chambers will scarce ever be free from the Visits of the Officers, whenever they think fit to make a rummage.

Mrs. *Sotsw*. Ay, and we must keep Books of Accompt of all our Transactions too.

Mrs. *Raisin*. That's impossible.

Mrs. *Dasb*. Besides, we shall be obliged to take out Permits, whenever we have Occasion to remove our Commodities from one Place to another, which will be very troublesome, and hinder the Dispatch of Business; for Chapmen must often go away unserved, Permits not being always to be obtained.

Mrs. *Sotsw*. If all our Vessels are to be gauged in a proper Manner, it is humbly presumed there won't be a sufficient Number of Officers, unless they disband the Army.

Mrs. *Dasb*. The Instruments made use of in the present Method of Gauging, won't suit our Vessels.

28 *The COMMODITY Excis'd :*

Mrs. Tallow. Why, then the Officers must get proper and sufficient Tools ; I am sure our *Surveyor* is provided.

Mrs. Barley. Suppose the Officers Sliding-Rule is rotten or decayed, is the Government obliged to repair it ?

Mrs. Sotfw. Yes, to be sure, or to send an Officer furnished with sound Materials.

Mrs. Barley. I am afraid it will be in the Power of wicked Officers to ruin us, by having at the End of their *dipping Rods*, something that may hurt, if not entirely Spoil our Vessels, and occasion a continual Leakage ; a Case which may happen to others, and probably may fall upon us, not having it in our Power to refuse an *Entry*.

Mrs. Dasp. Now, I conceive, the Design of the intended *Excise*, is calculated to prevent the Running of Commodities.

Mrs. Sotfw. There's no way to hinder that, but by suppressing the Hawkers who infest the Streets Night and Day, impudently offering their damaged Ware to every one, to the great Detriment of us fair Traders.

Mrs. Barley. I don't value it ; the *Exciseman* who surveys our Malt, is a strong-back'd *Irishman*, and he has used me well these five Years.

Mrs. Dasp. You are happy. — Last Week a young Fellow, thinking, I suppose, my
Husband

Husband was absent, comes to our House, and tells me he had an Information of some Brandy in our Cellar, that never paid Duty, and, says he, I must Search.

Mrs. Sotsw. Ay, was the Fellow so impudent?

Mrs. Dastb. I seeing him resolved, steps into the Cellar with him; and no sooner was I got down, but he pulled up my Coats, and shewed me his Instrument for Gauging, but was hindered in his Design by my Husband, who came in the critical Minute.

Mrs. Sotsw. What did the Fellow say then?

Mrs. Dastb. Fellow, d'ye call him? — I'll assure you he was much of a Gentleman. Why, he begged Pardon, said it was his Duty; but believed it was a wrong Information; made a handsome Bow, tipt me the Whink, and so went off.

Mrs. Tallow. I wonder there's no Ballads about this Excise.

Mrs. Dastb. So there is; I'll Sing you one.

Sings.

*Sir Blue having got a Cabal of his Friends,
By Places and Pensions secur'd to his Ends,
Accosts them as thus with an audible Voice,
I have now got a Scheme will make you rejoice.
What signifies trifling with things of small Note,
We're sure of our Point, when we come to the Vote.
Then*

30 **The COMMODITY Excis'd :**

*Then we'll throw off the Mask, and cast off Disguise,
And push home at once for a gen'ral Excise.
'Twill keep Trade more under, you all must confess,
Than e'er did the Troops of W ——— or H ———.
If this Yoke we can put, 'twill make them submit,
And greedily give us whate'er we think fit:
With Tobacco and Wine at first we'll begin,
And pretend that is all to take the Fools in.
These two b'ing granted to be under Excise,
How easily every thing else is our Prize!*

So that you see, Ladies, we are threaten'd to be ravished.

Mrs. Tallow. Who values or fears it; I am not afraid of the best Officer among them.

Mrs. Raisin. So according to this Scheme, we shan't have a Dram to ourselves undiscover'd; for the Creatures will search our very Closets.

Mrs. Dash. Yes you may, if you please the Exciseman.

Enter Betty.

Madam, my Master's a coming.

Mrs. Sotsw. To order, Ladies; here Betty, put away the Bottle and Glass.

Enter Mr. Sotsw. Worth, and Celinda.

Sotsw. So, Ladies, I am glad to see you. My Dear, I have brought you a Couple of Petitioners, who want your Consent to go to Bed together.

Mrs. Sotsw. So, Celinda, you'll take care to get an Officer of your own to do Duty, and not trust to the Government. Cel.

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Cel. Not without your Consent, Madam.

Mrs. Sotsw. You have always been a dutiful Girl, I must say; and I believe *Mr. Wor- thy* will use you well: So Heaven bless you together.

Mr. Sotsw. You have my Blessing too, and may you live long and happy together.

Wor. My Thanks attend you both for this so great a Blessing. — I intend so to live with my Spouse that neither she nor you shall have Cause to repent our Marriage.

Mr. Sotsw. I don't at all doubt it. — *Betty*, what do you think of this?

Betty. Why Sir, I always thought it would come to this; but I don't intend to gnaw the Sheets any longer neither. — I won't be long after my Mistress.

Wor. I believe not, *Betty*; for my Man tells me you are about the same Business.

Betty. He told you very true, Sir.

Mr. Sotsw. Why then one Wedding Dinner may serve you all; for if *Richard* and *Betty* are not married the same Day, ten to one if they don't lie in the same Bed.

Mrs. Sotsw. I shall be very loth to lose *Celinda's* Company. — Suppose, my Dear, as Fortune has bless'd us, if we should leave off Trade, and retire to *Mr. Wor- thy's* Seat with *Celinda*. — Perhaps he won't refuse us.

Wor. Nothing but that could compleat my Happiness; and this you may be sure of, that whatever is dear to *Celinda*, is so to me.

Mr.

32 *The* **COMMODITY** *Excis'd :*

Mr. Sotsw. Why then, *Mr. Worthy*, I'll take my Wife's Advice. — To-morrow you shall commit Matrimony, stay in Town a Month, and then I'll bid *London* adieu, and set out with you for the Country.

Wor. And now, my dear *Celinda*, we have nothing to do but to study each other's Temper, and avoid those little Bickerings so common among married People. Whenever your Temper is a little ruffled, as perhaps sometimes it may be, (for that may happen to the best of Women,) speak your Mind in a calm manner, and let nothing interrupt our mutual Love. For

*Love can our Passions easily controul,
Seizes the Heart, and captivates the Soul.
If any thing to Heav'n we may compare,
'Tis Love return'd from some obliging Fair,
And Hymen's Rights to make the happy Pair.*

Exeunt.

Author and Bookseller.

Author. Well, *Mr. Calfskin*, how d'ye like it?

Calfskin. The Thing may do, but I can't afford to give much for it.

Author. I suppose it's worth something: --- will you buy the Copy or no?

Calfskin. Come, we'll go to *Lebeck's-Head*, eat a Cutlet, and talk of it.

Author. With all my Heart, Sir.

F I N I S.



